



Sara Kopyy  
Senate Committee on Rules  
RE: Support SB 776

March 11th, 2021

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

My name is Sara Kopyy, and I live in Tigard. I am a high school student, and I am a member of the Youth Action Team with Next Up Action Fund. I support SB 776, which will allow 16 and 17 year olds to participate in school board elections.

Allowing 16 and 17 year olds to participate in school board elections has many long-term benefits. For instance, it allows youth to gain practice and experience with voting, which will increase their likelihood of participating in democratic elections once they are 18 years old and beyond. As someone who helped to register and pre-register students 16+ years old this past fall, I can personally vogue for the increased interest and desire for participation that grew amongst the students. Allowing youth to become introduced to the democratic processes at this age will plant the seed for further action and awareness as they enter adulthood.

Additionally, SB 776 will allow for student voice to grow in decisions that directly affect their education. As members of a school board, individuals are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the best educational resources, policies, and practices for the students they represent. What better way to do this than with the input of the students themselves? Speaking from personal experience, my school and district have worked hard this past school year to adopt new policies, regulations, and approaches to learning within the realm of equity and inclusivity. An integral part of this process has been the inclusion of student voice. My peers and I have been given the spaces to share our thoughts, feelings, and desires about what needs to be addressed in these changes. As a result, members of the district boards, school administrators, and teachers have implemented student suggestions into their plans, and learned more about the needs of their students. By including 16 and 17 year olds into school board elections there is an increased sense of accountability to the board members, agency to the students, and overall connectivity between the various levels of education.

Students are the future leaders, and they need an opportunity to practice the skills that will prepare them for what lays ahead. With all of this in mind, I strongly ask for the support of the committee members to pass SB 776.

Sincerely,  
Sara Koppy